

From: Richard Carrier <richard.carrier@icloud.com>
Subject: A Polyamorous Loveletter (For Want of What Else to Call It)
Date: September 11, 2014 at 10:06:38 AM EDT
To: Heina Dadabhoy <heinous.heina@gmail.com>

Oh, Heina. You frustrate me! It seems like every time I'm getting up the nerve to hit on you, you post something like this (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/heinous/2014/09/10/deny-fatphobia/>). So I can't, because I fear you'll think it's because of that (some pity nonsense or other). Damnit!

(Before I continue, please feel free to cyber-pat me on the head and say poor man, I'm not that into you. Expecting you'd say 'oh, no, and I wish you hadn't asked' is one reason I've been putting this off, as I'd be mortified at offending a friend! But I hope you'll understand my at least taking a chance and being open about my desire; and a no certainly won't offend me. I'm also aware this is like some letter a guy might write to his love interest in high school. Eesh. I don't normally do it this way. But function dictated from this time. Even though writing this to you is scary.)

Okay. So this time I'm saying fuck it and just bearing my heart to you, and being a little overly frank and forthcoming, and just flat out hitting on you. It has nothing to do with posts like that (you are unequivocally awesome; and you know it, which is unequivocally sexy). And I was hoping to talk about this in person sometime, but (a) I don't know when that will next be and (b) once again my previous opportunities kept getting thwarted, so I'm giving up on that plan and making an overture by epistle. Old fashioned but for it being electronic.

I've been working up the nerve to tell you how much I desire you (although I am a little sexually intimidated by you, which only makes me more nervous). I don't mean as a life partner (I think you have your hands full there anyway, and by my wife's rules for our open relationship I'm not allowed to have more of those right now), but as a sexual partner. Even if just once. I admire you immensely. Your bravado, your power, your honesty, your intelligence, your character. Your skill as a writer. And for me, admiring a woman is an enormous turn on. Competence is erotic. And sharing sexual experiences with incredible women like you is so what I want out of life. It only adds that you're pretty. Your eyes just melt me. Lots I'd want to kiss on you. But I don't have your permission to go there here, so I'll just leave it at that.

When we last hung out I had thought of asking you, especially that night we played slash and you were the second to last to leave my room, but you were with Neil that weekend, and he wasn't well, too, and I worried it would seem weird moving in there, and **[name redacted]** wanted me, and though I would have said yes to a threeway, I didn't think that would be appropriate to suggest (not having discussed the possibility with either of you before). So alas, I didn't want to freak you out with any overture, and spent the night with her (quite happily, don't get me wrong; **[name redacted]** has her own share of awesome, and we had a great night together).

Plaintiff's
Affidavit
Exhibit 2

You just radiate agency. And that's like a brilliant, warm light you just want to embrace and experience passionately. I can go on admiring you from afar, as a writer and activist and colleague and valuable asset to our movement, and I can go on spending excellent time together with you as a friend when we happen to be around each other. I won't be badly dejected by a no. But if there is any chance you want me, I'm hoping to know.

--

Richard Carrier
<http://www.richardcarrier.info>

From: Heina Dadabhoy <heinous.heina@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: A Polyamorous Loveletter (For Want of What Else to Call It)
Date: September 11, 2014 at 4:48:16 PM EDT
To: Richard Carrier <richard.carrier@icloud.com>

Hm, well, how can I say this?

You must have mistaken me for someone who is impressed by multiple accounts of multiple conquests, thinks calling an "R U DTF" email a "loveletter" is amusing, confuses "getting a hall pass after getting caught rampantly cheating" for "polyamory", would think that someone would hit on me out of pity, and hasn't noticed the escalation of the way in which you've been acting and talking about and around me.

I must have mistaken you for someone who'd get the hint from me not acknowledging and/or deflecting the aforementioned hints you've been conspicuously dropping.

From: Richard Carrier <richard.carrier@icloud.com>
Subject: Re: A Polyamorous Loveletter (For Want of What Else to Call It)
Date: September 11, 2014 at 6:26:49 PM EDT
To: Heina Dadabhoy <heinous.heina@gmail.com>

Oh, dear. Heina, I'm so sorry. I truly didn't mean to offend or hurt you. I'll not renew any overtures again. I really do believe and feel all the admiration for you I expressed, and that won't change. Everything I've said has been sincere. But I'll keep our interactions from now on strictly professional. If there is anything I can do to keep our friendship, let me know and I will. It does matter to me, quite apart from my unwanted desires. Otherwise I will assume you don't want me to hang out with you in future (which I quite understand, from your reaction). It would be helpful, to ensure your comfort from now on, if you gave me some idea of how to greet you next time we meet (I'd feel compelled to apologize again, but you might not want that; you certainly might not want to hug, for

example; by default I'll just smile and say hi and ask after your welfare, unless you don't want even that). I really apologize for this.

From: Heina Dadabhoy <heinous.heina@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: A Polyamorous Loveletter (For Want of What Else to Call It)
Date: September 11, 2014 at 7:09:01 PM EDT
To: Richard Carrier <richard.carrier@icloud.com>

I'm fine with nothing about our interactions changing.

From: Richard Carrier <richard.carrier@icloud.com>
Subject: Re: A Polyamorous Loveletter (For Want of What Else to Call It)
Date: September 11, 2014 at 9:12:30 PM EDT
To: Heina Dadabhoy <heinous.heina@gmail.com>

On Sep 11, 2014, at 6:09 PM, Heina Dadabhoy <heinous.heina@gmail.com> wrote:

I'm fine with nothing about our interactions changing.

Okay. I'll be awkward. But that's me.

After I last wrote, I've been agonizing over what I've done for a while (on airplanes all day), and realize I really fucked up. I should not have shared my thoughts and feelings with you without first asking you if you wanted to hear them. That's just wrong. I also realize I must have really ruined your day. So I apologize for that as well. I won't communicate about this again unless you ask.

--

Richard

From: Heina Dadabhoy <heinous.heina@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: A Polyamorous Loveletter (For Want of What Else to Call It)
Date: September 11, 2014 at 10:55:25 PM EDT
To: Richard Carrier <richard.carrier@icloud.com>

Just so we're clear:

You don't have to agonize over telling me something. It wasn't sharing your thoughts and feelings that was a problem. It was everything else I mentioned.

Nothing was ruined. I'm not of the belief that communication is a wrong thing.

From: Richard Carrier <richard.carrier@icloud.com>
Subject: Re: A Polyamorous Loveletter (For Want of What Else to Call It)
Date: September 11, 2014 at 11:36:20 PM EDT
To: Heina Dadabhoy <heinous.heina@gmail.com>

No, certainly, indeed everything you said was true. That is my life as you described it, and how I live it, and the nature of the relationships I have. But I shouldn't have assumed you wanted to be a part of it or would even want to be asked. It really matters to me a lot that you be respected and that I not cross boundaries I shouldn't, or make you uncomfortable for any reason, and that was all where I went wrong. And what makes me feel awful.

From: Heina Dadabhoy <heinous.heina@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: A Polyamorous Loveletter (For Want of What Else to Call It)
Date: September 12, 2014 at 12:54:31 AM EDT
To: Richard Carrier <richard.carrier@icloud.com>

You've been hinting heavily at this for months now. If you want to feel awful, feel awful for months of my wanting to tell you no but not being asked in a direct enough way for me to just say no and get it over with. It gives me no pleasure to reject anyone for any reason. I have no desire to make anyone feel awful.

From: Richard Carrier <richard.carrier@icloud.com>
Subject: Re: A Polyamorous Loveletter (For Want of What Else to Call It)
Date: September 12, 2014 at 1:08:01 AM EDT
To: Heina Dadabhoy <heinous.heina@gmail.com>

This actually makes me feel a little better, if that's the case. I don't feel awful because you said no. Oh dear no. Your rejection is fine. I feel awful because I so clearly offended you in my approach (and in other respects). At which I realized my approach was atrocious, and must make you think horribly of me. Which makes me feel awful about

myself, not you. As someone I admire greatly, your opinion of me matters to me. I'd paraphrase Elizabeth Bennett, "I can't bear the thought of [her] being in the world and thinking ill of me," only I feel more like Mr. Collins presently than Mr. Darcy, so the analogy is off. I'm not kidding when I say I value our friendship. I'm perfectly fine with you being a no on anything beyond that. And will always be. Yes, there will be a little private pining for you, which I will keep to myself, but that's not feeling awful. You can even openly mock me for it henceforth and I'd be amused, not hurt! (Not that I assume you would, I'd just genuinely consider it funny if you did, because I'm weird.)

From: Richard Carrier <richard.carrier@icloud.com>
Subject: Re: A Polyamorous Loveletter (For Want of What Else to Call It)
Date: September 12, 2014 at 1:37:00 AM EDT
To: Heina Dadabhoy <heinous.heina@gmail.com>

I'm not sure now whether we are on the same page about what just happened, so I apologize for this one, I have to fisk your initial reply so you might see my thought process upon reading it (this is hours moved and thus with far less horrified emotion)...don't read on if you don't care, though. Just if you do.

When I said your reply was entirely true, that may be hyperbole, but here is what I mean...

// You must have mistaken me for someone who is impressed by multiple accounts of multiple conquests //

That's true enough. I didn't mention thinking you'd be impressed (and I don't think that, nor do I reference my relationships with women as conquests), but indeed I may have been mistaken in what your opinion of my discussing my promiscuity with you might be. It was offensive to you. I did not know that until now.

Unless by "impressed" you meant only "amused," and you weren't amused, in which case your statement may be spot on, and that's how I initially read it.

// thinks calling an "R U DTF" email a "loveletter" is amusing //

That's even more the truth. You have reduced it to the harshest and most blunt distillation, but alas. I would consider it ghastly to actually exclude all thought and feeling and reason in expressing any RUDTF. But you distilled it to essentials. That is what I expressed, and I did not conceal that. And I indeed could not think of what to politely call it so tried a terrible joke as a substitute. And you were definitely not amused by that. Which in hindsight, upon your observation, was a warranted reflection. I felt rightly chastised.

// confuses "getting a hall pass after getting caught rampantly cheating" for "polyamory" //

Here I am assuming you are referencing my implied assumption that all polyamory means open relationships (and that, by contrast, you are not claiming no polyamorous configurations are like mine...which so far I have only ever told you my side of, not my wife's, because that's her business).

Assuming I read that right, I did not intend to imply that, but intention is not magic; I was actually trying to ask if that did fit you or not. Clumsily. Badly. Horribly. I should have just asked that, generically, first, so that I would even know before putting you in an uncomfortable place as I did. (Or second. First should have been, "Can I ask you a personal question about your polyamory?" to which a "No" would have concluded the matter. And a "yes" would have led to the next question, about what sorts of relationships you and your partners would consider.)

It was that realization that haunts me now. I did it wrong. Really, unthinkingly wrong.

Otherwise, "getting a hall pass after getting caught rampantly cheating" is an accurate description of the course of my life. Incomplete (for having only my half of the sequence of events). But that's presently irrelevant, as I don't believe the whole story should matter. Your sentence remains true. We met a crisis in our relationship and decided to redefine it.

// would think that someone would hit on me out of pity //

I don't. I was worried you would think someone would. And not be amused.

So here my concern was your perception, here as I am sure you would confirm accurately described, which stung.

This has been a concern of mine since you wrote the following (not a reference to pity, but to not being sure of someone's motivations owing to the context):

<http://skepchick.org/2012/05/sex-and-the-newbie/>

Which has haunted me, because my desire and my admiration are equally real, and yet the last thing I wanted is to give you any reason to think the one was just a proxy for the other. You deserve your praise. You have earned it. And continue to. Just because that turns me on should not undermine your faith in that. I hope not.

// and hasn't noticed the escalation of the way in which you've been acting and talking about and around me. //

Entirely true. I didn't notice any noticing at all. The closest to come was your staying next to last that one night then leaving me and **[name redacted]** on the same bed and shortly texting me after you left "You're fun when you're drunk." Which was wholly

cryptic as to signaling interest, disinterest, or neither. That's not an excuse, just a description of my lack of noticing.

And again, everything I've said about you, publicly, and to you privately, has been entirely sincere and true. And remains so. It's not a game. It's what I actually think and feel.

// I must have mistaken you for someone who'd get the hint from me not acknowledging and/or deflecting the aforementioned hints you've been conspicuously dropping. //

Also true. As evidenced by my failing to get that hint, it follows that I am de facto not someone who would. Which is mortifying to realize, and yet another thing I have been apologizing for.

Hence, again, you have accurately described the reality.

It was the wording of all the above, deliciously brutal, that made me realize I'd offended and hurt you, by my being so insensitive and daft and not having thought this through better (and thereby given you the easier no you would have wanted).

The irony of being so adeptly and succinctly pwned by a woman whose skills as a writer I admire is not lost on me; indeed, being the weirdo I am, I admired that even as I was devastated by what it meant you thought of me.

But the point being, all these are the things that I took away from that assessment.

As for my life, occasional sexual relationships with women I admire and befriend, plus a single life partner, is the life I want to live, and do live. With the full knowledge and consent of all concerned. That is indeed true. This in no way means I don't care about whether I treat any women in my life with respect for their feelings and wishes, though, which is why the realization of having harmed yours hurts. It doesn't hurt because I can't have you. It hurts because I hurt you. And performed badly in the eyes of someone whose judgment matters to me.

From: Heina Dadabhoy <heinous.heina@gmail.com>

Subject: Re: A Polyamorous Loveletter (For Want of What Else to Call It)

Date: September 12, 2014 at 1:53:52 AM EDT

To: Richard Carrier <richard.carrier@icloud.com>

You haven't hurt me, harmed me, or offended me, as I said. I'm annoyed at worst, and now, glad to clear the air, which has felt murky for a while.

From: Richard Carrier <richard.carrier@icloud.com>
Subject: Re: A Polyamorous Loveletter (For Want of What Else to Call It)
Date: September 12, 2014 at 4:02:04 PM EDT
To: Heina Dadabhoy <heinous.heina@gmail.com>

Annoyed at worst! Noted.

Thanks for interacting on it. I appreciate that. If there is any more murk you want to clear, let me know. Otherwise, I'll just return to normally scheduled programming.